AN ISLAMIC POLITICAL SYSTEM OF NIGERIA

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‘Turn unto God for aid, and have patience in adversity, Verily, all the earth belongs to God: He gives it as a Heritage to such as He wills of His secants; and the Future belongs to the God-conscious.’

Holy Quran 7: 128.

I. IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE

The most current theme engaging the attention of the world is obviously the Soviet Union. The social earthquake of August 19, 1991, has triggered what some regard as the second Russian Revolution, which is as spectacular as the first Russian

Revolution of 1917. The rise of Communism in 1917 marked the birth of Soviet Union as a world power in the New World, proud, confident, effective at home, influential abroad, and dreaded by all nations as an awesome, ruthless military machine. With such a power behind it Communism grew rapidly into the most potent ideology in the world, coherent as it was forceful and uncompromisingly aggressive. At a time, especially with the emergence of Communist China and the respect and awe with which the ideology was held in the regions of the world under colonialism. Communism appeared to be on a sure and steady road towards world conquest.

Then in one short memorable and fateful day in August 1991, all of a sudden, like lightning, Communism, perhaps the strongest and most effective political complex ever to exist - capable of wiping out the human race many times over – disintegrated and dissolved into thin air, forcing Soviet Union on the brink, and possibly on a road to ultimate oblivion. These dramatic developments remind those familiar with the Qur'an of the fate of Ancient Egypt. Egypt was once the most developed and powerful civilization in the world, a fact which perhaps prompted its most celebrated

Pharaoh to declare to his people in self-adulation: “I am your Lord, All-Highest!". The Communist ideology and Pharaoh's ideology are fundamentally identical: both proclaimed the death of God and installed human idols in His stead. For Egypt the end was dramatic, painful and traumatic and, most importantly of all, awfully quick. "We seized them," the Lord they denied with so absolutely vengeful arrogance says, “with the seizing of One Mighty, Omnipotent!” The same remark could apply with admirable justification to the fate of Soviet Union. And the lesson is clear: no nation however powerful, can escape the consequences of its deeds, nor the fate that is due to all who indulge in idolatry. As Allah puts it:

> “*Behold, everything have We created in due measure and proportion; and our ordaining a thing and its coming into being is but one act, like the twinkling of an eye. Thus indeed, did We destroy people like you in the past:*
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> *who, then, is willing to take it to heart?”(1)*

The collapse of Soviet Union is indeed an event of historic and global proportion. Even those who at first cheered, particularly the United States of America, are beginning to have a second thought. It is indeed true that Communism, which saw itself as the only authentic religion for the New Age, was in the words of America's former National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. “A great and mad

delusion", yet the full ramifications of its sudden fall on global politics and on the future of mankind are still largely unknown. The rapidity with which events are unfolding, not only in the Soviet Union but in all regions of the world, does raise serious questions on the ultimate fate of humanity. No one dares to predict what would happen in the next decade, or indeed in the next five, three or even two years; just as no leader can now say with any certainty what would befall him in the next one year or even less. We seem to be in an extraordinary period in time when all things we consider great and powerful, human or material, is bound for extinction.

Instinctively the world responds to the event in the Soviet Union with an absorbing intensity and a profound sense of foreboding, as if it expects some kind of global commotion to follow, even to the extent that other matters of similar dimensions are being cast aside. This is possibly due to the immediate issues at stake, should the Soviet Union disintegrate; One such issue is the fate of some thirty thousand nuclear warheads that threaten specifically, Western Civilization and in general human existence. Another, indeed, is the prospect of a far-reaching geo-political realignment of forces which may result ultimately in the emergence of a new Islamic power block comprising some of the Muslim republics of Soviet Union, especially the Oil-rich, prosperous Azerbaijan, Iran, Afghanistan and possibly Pakistan and Iraq. This possibility even more than the nuclear threat, is the root of the current frantic effort by the Western powers to hold back the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Islam, then, is the ultimate issue in the ongoing concern over the fate of Russian.

II. SHIFTING LANDSCAPE

The concern for the Soviet Union ought not cause us to stop worrying, even if momentarily, about other issues which, potentially, have dangerous implications for the world. We do not as yet know what will happen next in Eastern Europe after the social revolution that wiped out the Communist party and incorporated them into the Western economy. Will those communities realize their dream of attaining absolute freedom and unlimited prosperity as they imagined or will something else, utterly unpredictable, erupt?

But a far more important worry lingers on. The Gulf War has been fought: It was won by U.S.A. and lost by Iraq. But the underlying cause of the war, Oil, has hardly been resolved. The Gulf region has remained throughout history as a place where the periodic twists and turns in human destiny takes place. The revered twinrivers, Euphrates and Tigris, watch perhaps with unassailable and enduring patience the ebbs and flow of human history as nation after nation, civilization after civilization rise and fall before their watchful eyes. Roman Civilization fell on the laps of River Tigris, when Constantinople was captured by Muslims in 1453.

The Ottoman Empire which conquered Roman Empire, in turn collapsed on the same spot in 1922, leaving Western Civilization as the supreme power in the world. Earlier virtually all the ancient civilizations met their death in that venerable region, the

cradle of human civilization, most of them were brought to their knees by greed and arrogance. The New World, however, has added a new dimension to the role this region would to play in the future destiny of mankind. Prophet Muhammad said:

> "*Euphrates would soon uncover its Treasure of Gold, for which the people of the world would go to war. Ninety-nine out of every hundred will perish, each one thinking he would survive to take possession of the Treasure." (2)*

It is difficult to say whether what we have witnessed early this year was merely a prelude to world-wide conflagration involving a desperate but futile scramble for the Black Gold, or whether indeed this ancient mover and shaker of history would, in another fateful gesture, uncover some other sources of energy and prosperity which would entice the entire human race into war of self-destruction. In a rapidly shifting political landscape as we have now, we cannot rule out the possibility of another upheaval in the Gulf, a region which not only holds as its possession a preponderant share or oil resources but, what is more, also sits on the strategic. Shatt al Arab waterways, which a respected historian calls the busiest round about in the world — the scene of the eight year war-between Iran and Iraq. We are sure that the West would continue to do all in its power to maintain its control over oil resources because oil is its life-vein, sustaining as it does Western technology and military machine. Yet the time will surely come when the nations that are the primary,

legitimate owners of these resources will resist subservience and exploitations and break free as Prophet Muhammad indicated, for it is not in the nature of life for one nation to dominate the world forever. Life is premised on the principle of rise and fall, of continuous succession of powers, epochs and dispensations.

Some scholars and statesmen have started to develop a new theme, which for one reason or another has been far too long the subject of neglect, in spite of its relevance to humanity. And that is China. China had been for ages an imperial power, but had never quite entertained a territorial ambition like other imperial powers. She had been content to live and thrive within her own borders, satisfied with its own version of geography, in which the rest of the world is represented by mere clots while imperial China looms large, covering almost the entire globe in absolute magnificence. As a modern nation, China has the singular distinction of constituting roughly one fourth of mankind. She is also a nuclear and to a considerable extent an industrial power. China thus has in her favour first and foremost an overwhelming population in addition to military and industrial prowess. Now two questions arise from this situation. First, what happens if, in the event of the collapse of the Communist system there, China is plunged into a social and political turmoil similar to what is happening in the Soviet Union? Second, what will happen if China decides to venture beyond its borders in search of territory and imperial glory?

In the event of a general political upheaval in China, the world may be faced with a refugee problem so overwhelming as to break beyond repair all the existing facilities for the purpose. You could imagine what it would look like to have say one hundred million human beings moving in one direction as refugees, three hundred in another direction, two hundred million this way and a further four hundred million that way. And all could be just one out of several more waves of human exodus! In the event of the second scenario, the entire world would be put into a political disaster in which one quarter of mankind backed by nuclear technology will be at war with the rest. It is certainly not going to be an easy war.

Quite a few experts on the Quran have identified China as home to Gog and Magog, [Yajuj wa Ma'juj] who would one day launch an invasion on mankind. All these are of course matters of pure speculation, but they are quite thought provoking.

There are also, apart from the forgoing, general problems of political and social nature. One natural problem though looms large, threatening life on earth: the prospect of a universal ecological catastrophe that has been worrying scientists for years. This gigantic problem will never go away simply because Soviet Union is in turmoil, or Communism may collapse in China, or whatever else might be happening elsewhere. The large number of nuclear warheads and facilities in existence in virtually all the industrial nations further compounds the situation, for in addition to the danger of pollution and radiation they represent, mankind is not safe from some

sort of nuclear accident of a horrendous scale. On top of all this, we do have one ticking time-bomb which is of special significance to Muslims: the continued existence of Israel in the heart land of Islam. This singular fact alone portends a potential existential threat not only the Middle East but the entire world.

III. THE AMERICAN ERA

The issues we have highlighted so far all point to the fact that we are living in an age of uncertainty. Mankind is undergoing a new process of evolution where things are continuously in a state of flux — the mighty continue to fall, and institutions, ideologies and systems, big or small, could wither away overnight. These unfolding changes, these endless dramas would not come as a surprise to Muslims who are already conversant with the the order established by Allah. Moreover, nothing in Creation is static or constant; continuous process of evolution is the rule. The Quran says:

> *All that is on earth will perish: but will abide forever the Face of Your Lord - full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour. Of Him seeks its need every creature in the heavens and on earth: Every day in (new) Splendour does He shine! (3)*

Prophet Muhammad explained the passage to mean that every day, or every moment, Allah causes changes to take place in the universe, and in the human condition. As a result, a ruler falls as another rises; likewise, nations, civilizations epochs and

systems. Each of them has a term determined and it goes inexorably into oblivion when its term expires. The manner in which governments in Eastern Europe collapsed like cardboard, and the rate at which despots fall with ignominy, even the irrepressible Mrs.Thatcher, the British Prime Minister. the Iron Lady, has drawn many thinkers to a new understanding of history. After many decades of wandering in agnosticism and cynicism, it has finally dawned on humanity that it urgently needs a spiritual awakening. The profound, religious passion that fueled the freedom movements in Eastern Europe, especially East Germany and Poland, is quite remarkable for an age that treats religion as merely a sort of background music. And when we take a holistic view of the movements for social change in all parts of the world, more especially in the Muslim world, we see very vividly a phenomenal upsurge in commitment to God. Never before in the contemporary age has the desire and craving for Providence been so acutely and wholeheartedly felt. Change, it is now felt, is fundamentally the handiwork of Providence. Otherwise, who could ever move such seemingly immovable mountains as Shah's Iran, or Communist Russia? May I quote the Quran again, which explains such,

momentous occasions as Providence's piece of art.

> *You see the mountains and think them firmly fixed: but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away. Such is the artistry of Allah, who disposes of all things in perfect order. (4).*

Even so, there seems to subsist still one immovable mountain, the United States of America. In the last few years, America has acquired new strength and prestige so much so that she may well see herself as a truly universal state, a fact further reinforced by the decline of Soviet power.

The Gulf War has opened the eyes of the nations of the world to the extent of America's influence, and its unchallenged military supremacy. America, in short, rules the land, the sea and the air or so it seems. Perez de Cuellar. Secretary General of the United Nations sums it up all when he told the Iraqis some two days before the Gulf War erupted, in just one short memorable sentence: “This is the era of America.” Sure enough, you can see the hand of America in virtually every policy that most of the countries now pursue willy nilly: multiparty democracy, population control, debasement of national currencies, free market economy, and, don't forget, recognition of Israel. These are the cardinal principles of the new world order — Pax Americana.

There is nothing new in the history of mankind for one power to predominate over the others, but what we are witnessing now is quite extraordinary.

America heads what is called the Western Alliance, which now is the world's strongest military power. Within the Alliance a new economic system *is* emerging, namely the economic integration of Europe to form the world's largest single market,

and probably the world's most formidable industrial complex. Japan, also within the alliance, may serve as an unwelcome, but necessary evil, non-white industrial and economic counterforce to Europe as well as to America. No one really knows the true intention of Germany, the nation whose ambition to rule the world led to two so-called world wars. America's ambitions meanwhile are boundless. In the United Nations. America's word is the law, passed on to the rest of the world as the consensus of mankind. In the Muslim world, America maintains an overriding influence on Islam's sacred territories. Both the World Bank and International Monetary Fund work at her behest. Never before has the will of one nation over the affairs of the whole world been so complete. Perhaps. Americans are right to believe that theirs is a perpetual supremacy. We are at last on a threshold of a unipolar globe.

THE REAL WORLD ORDER

America is indeed a universal power. This is not at all in dispute. But the question.is: how long can America maintain its supremacy? The economic decline of America is a well-known. In fact, the matter has gone to the extent that some thinkers warn that this military giant is merely living on borrowed time. There are enough danger signals, warning of extreme internal social and moral decay in the United States capable of causing the collapse of the fabric of society. Furthermore, as a society which believes in white supremacy, racial tension in America is a potential threat to its very survival.

More important than all this, however, is the fact that overall, America is an iniquitous power. If there is ever an instance in which America identifies with the cause of justice, it must be a very rare one. Since its rise as a world power following her atomic attack on Japan, America has waged unjust wars on in so many weak nations, suppressed movements for freedom and justice, and propped up dictators and despots all over the world. In all these ventures, America never hesitated to use all manner of weapons against humanity, including weapons of mass destruction, nor all manner of methods of liquidation and extermination. More serious thinkers in the West are indeed of the belief that America is already suffering from an irreversible moral and social decay, and her term as *sole* universal power may be one of the shortest ever recorded.

The decline of America is highly imperceptible to the generality of the people, and many nations have been so intimidated and coerced into submission by economic blackmail and fear of military invasion that they dare not challenge America's hegemony. The matter is worsened by the new spirit of accord and unity among Western nations when action against a nation they consider recalcitrant is concerned. For a superficial observer, Western Civilization reigns supreme, without any credible challenger.

We are eternally grateful to the French historian and demographer, Emanuel Todd, for a fascinating and indeed original, daring and compelling perspective on the whole question of American global hegemony. Emmanuel Todd, who had earlier predicted the fall of Russia with a remarkable accuracy, published in 2003 his book titled *After the Empire*, published by Columbia University. According to Todd, American global dominance had since evaporated, guilty as had been of living above her means, guilty of squandering her goodwill and resources and oppressing friends and foes alike at home and abroad and exhibiting militaristic arsonist fire man behavior. Todd envisions the forging of a new alliance comprising European, Russian, Japanese, and Arab-Islamic world.

I have observed that the ramifications of the new changes are indeed unfathomable, causing a considerable unease in the intellectual circles everywhere as they continue to demolish one social theory after another. Contemporary Muslims thinkers, however, are almost unanimous in their belief that the prevailing Western system will not last much longer. The collapse of Communism is not therefore a vindication of the Western system, rather an advanced warning to the effect that more far-reaching changes are under way.

Muslims are the only people who are neither intimidated nor fascinated by America and her allies. Islam is the only way of life that has refused to surrender to Western Civilization. The Muslim Ummah is the only community in the world now

that is capable of challenging the Western hegemony. This is the crux of the matter and it leads me to the subject of this lecture. I have, deliberately avoided addressing the matter directly because of its complexity. The fear that is being expressed in many circles is that the demise of Soviet power will mean unlimited influence of America over other nations. Yet for Muslims, the seventy years of Communist rule has been an unmitigated disaster, as Communism was

exceptionally ruthless towards Muslims, and has never supported the aspirations of Muslims to live as Muslims.

America's new world order is a serious venture, which we may only underestimate at our peril. It appears to me to represent a final push by Western Civilization to conquer the whole world once and for all Nigeria, like many other countries, is unavoidably a part and parcel of that order, by virtue of the economic system in operation, and the secular dispensation that controls our public life. Thus we have reached a stage perhaps where what happens internally, such as the transition programs and others, do not reality matter, and cannot change the ultimate orientation of this nation. We have, sadly enough moved many steps deeper into economic crisis, intellectual and ideological subservience, a fate we share with many of the so-called Third World nations.

A great many changes are taking place in all parts of the Muslim Ummah. The task everywhere is to transform the society, re-construct the Islamic social order, and forge ahead towards a new civilization the world must respect. Muslims are engaged in a new all-embracing venture, with all the pains and difficulties it entails. The core and kernel of this worldwide phenomenon is the Islamic intellectual movement capable of withstanding the assault of secularism and explaining the Message of Islam in an unassailable manner. The truth is that the Muslim Ummah is engaged in a big struggle against the West and the forces that share similar values and orientations for the control of human destiny, a sort of moral and intellectual war to win the future. I do not think that we in Nigeria have any choice but to embrace the struggle in full force.

REFERENCES

1. *Noble Qur’an, Chapter 54 verses 49 & 50.*

2. *Hadith (Generally agreed upon).*

3. *Noble Qur’an Chapter 55 verses 26-27.*

4. *Noble Qur'an Chapter 20, verses 105-107.*